

Message Text

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BRUSSELS FOR USEEC

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, CY, TU

SUBJECT: RESETTLEMENT OF VAROSHA

REF: NICOSIA 2062

1. GREEK CYPRIOT NEWSPAPERS AUGUST 9 REPORTED TURKISH CYPRIOT LEADER DENKTASH WOULD ANNOUNCE THAT DAY THAT VAROSHA WAS OPEN TO RESETTLEMENT. PAPERS ALSO REPORTED A LARGE GROUP OF FOREIGN JOURNALISTS WOULD VISIT VAROSHA; THE ANNOUNCEMENT WOULD BE MADE AT THAT TIME.

2. BBC CORRESPONDENT JOHN BIERMAN ADVISED US HE WAS AMONG THE GROUP OF JOURNALISTS. HE HAD BEEN INVITED TO VISIT THE OPEN AREA OF VAROSHA SOME TIME BEFORE. HE ACCEPTED AND WENT TO FAMAGUSTA WITH A TURKISH CYPRIOT PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER ON

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AUGUST 9. WHEN THEY ARRIVED THEY PASSED THROUGH THE NARROW AREA OF THE NORTHERN PART OF VAROSHA WHICH HAS BEEN OPEN FOR SOME TIME (ABOUT ONE BLOCK SOUTH OF THE MAIN ROAD BY THE OLD CITY). THEY CAME TO THE NAVAL CHECKPOINT SEPARATING THE CONSTANTIA AREA FROM THE SMALL OPEN PORTION OF THE CITY. THEY CHECKPOINT WAS STILL OPERATIONAL.

3. THE PARTY PROCEEDED THROUGH THE CHECKPOINT TO THE CONSTANTIA HOTEL. THEY WERE GIVEN INFORMATION ABOUT THE OPENING OF THE CONSTANTIA AS A HOTEL AND CATERING SCHOOL BUT WERE INITIALLY PROHIBITED FROM TAKING PICTURES ON THE GROUNDS THAT IT WAS A SECURITY AREA. AFTER SOME ARGUMENT THEY WERE ALLOWED TO TAKE PICTURES OF THE HOTEL AND THE SEA BUT NOT OF THE NEIGHBORING PORT OF THE OLD CITY OF FAMAGUSTA.

4. AT THE END OF THIS PORTION OF THE VISIT BIERMAN ASKED THE PIO WHEN THE JOURNALISTS COULD PROCEED TO SEE THE REST OF VAROSHA. THE PIO RESPONDED THAT THEY COULD NOT SEE ANY MORE OF THE CITY. THE PORTION THEY HAD ALREADY BEEN THROUGH WAS ALL THAT WAS TO BE OPENED.

5. AN AMERICAN JOURNALIST WHO VISITED FAMAGUSTA WITH THE SAME PARTY, JOE ALEX MORRIS OF THE "LOS ANGELES TIMES," HAD A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT SLANT ON THE STORY. HE CORROBORATED THAT THE PARTY COULD ONLY GET AS FAR AS THE CONSTANTIA HOTEL; HOWEVER, HE SAID THE MAYOR OF FAMAGUSTA, MR. BORA ATUN, HAD MADE THE CLAIM THAT THE TURKISH CYPRIOTS NOW OCCUPY TWO-FIFTH OF THE TOWN OF FAMAGUSTA, THAT APPROXIMATELY 12 TO 15,000 TURKISH CYPRIOTS ARE RESIDING OUTSIDE THE OLD CITY WALLS (THE OLD TURKISH QUARTER) IN THE NEW AREA OF THE CITY. (COMMENT: WE BELIEVE THAT ATUN MUST HAVE BEEN SPEAKING OF THE PART OF THE CITY WEST OF THE MAIN ROAD FROM THE OLD CITY TO DHERINIA IN THE AREA KNOWN AS KATO VAROSHA, AS WELL AS THE NORTHERN FRINGE OF THE NEW CITY.

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THIS AREA HAS BEEN OCCUPIED BY TURKISH CYPRIOTS SINCE THE FALL OF 1974. END COMMENT.)

6. EVEN THOUGH MORRIS'S STORY EMPHASIZES THE BORA ATUN STATEMENTS AND CREATES THE IMPRESSION THAT THE TURKISH CYPRIOTS MAY BE MOVING INTO NEW AREAS, THERE IS NO CHANGE IN THE ACTUAL AREA UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE TURKISH MILITARY, ALL OF WHICH IS STILL UNOCCUPIED. MORRIS NOTED IN A CONCLUDING SENTENCE THAT HE COULD NOT GO INTO THE NEW PART OF VAROSHA BECAUSE THE TURKISH MILITARY COMMANDER WOULD NOT ALLOW HIM TO DO SO. IN LIGHT OF THIS, WE BELIEVE BOTH STORIES ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE INFORMATION GIVEN US BY TURKISH AMBASSADOR ONHON (REFTEL) ON AUGUST 4. THERE WAS ALSO A STORY IN THE MOST RELIABLE GREEK CYPRIOT NEWSPAPER, SIMERINI, TO THE EFFECT TURKISH CYPRIOT OFFICIALS HAD INFORMED SIMERINI EDITORS THERE ARE NO PLANS TO OPEN MORE OF VAROSHA.

7. DRAFTER:DCM:CEDILLERY.
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